time to coordinating and managing the statewide planning process. It is recognized that this arrangement is not always possible. When a full-time statewide planning coordinator is not provided, the plan should specify if or when the state intends to establish a full-time statewide planning coordinator.

1. Background and Preliminary Steps	
1.4	Describe the communications and interoperability environment of the current emergency response effort.

Describing the current communications interoperability environment, often referred to as the "current state," can be done by performing a capabilities assessment. DHS recommends performing a capabilities assessment either as a part of or prior to the statewide planning process. This will ensure everyone involved in the planning process has a shared understanding of the current situation and capabilities.

When documenting the current state, it is helpful to consider the five critical elements discussed in the Interoperability Continuum. Using the critical elements will assist in documenting a comprehensive and complete view of the current communications and interoperability environment. It is important to consider the predictable types of risks, hazards, and incidents that face not only the state's emergency response agencies, but all the agencies involved in incident response.

The information from the capabilities assessment can be presented in the statewide plan using the elements of the Continuum for a framework. The capabilities assessment should also include, where appropriate, any interoperability information from the state homeland security strategic plan.

1. Background and Preliminary Steps	
1.5	Include a problem definition and possible solutions that address the challenges identified in achieving interoperability within the SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum.

As states perform the capabilities assessment and document the current communications and interoperability environment, they should begin to identify opportunities for improvement in order to improve the current situation. In addition, during the collaborative planning process there will be discussions regarding current critical issues and problems. During the discussion, each of the five critical elements of the Interoperability Continuum should be addressed. The goal of the discussion is to ensure the planning community has a common understanding of the communications interoperability issues and challenges.

Once the entire planning community has agreed upon the priority issues, a problem definition should be created and presented in the statewide plan. A problem definition details the current issues, challenges, and major disconnects facing communications interoperability. It should provide specific examples illustrating how those issues, challenges, and disconnects negatively impact the emergency response community's ability to perform their job. Depending on the complexity of these issues, it may be appropriate to focus on one or two specific issues and present them in the problem definition. The problem definition can then be used to develop the state's vision statement.

1. Background and Preliminary Steps	
1.6	Identify any Tactical Interoperability Communications Plans (TICP) in the state.

The statewide plan should provide a list of any Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) regions or designated metropolitan areas. Included in the list, the statewide plan should also identify if the

UASI region or designated metropolitan area has created a TIC Plan. If no TIC Plan exists for either a UASI region or a designated metropolitan area, the statewide plan should provide an explanation as to why no plan has been created, and provide an anticipated timeline for its creation. This information should be presented in the State Overview section of the statewide plan, and can be presented as a simple list.

1.	Background and Preliminary Steps
1.7	Set the scope and timeframe of the plan.

Every statewide plan should specify the scope and timeframe of the plan. Because statewide plans are assumed to cover the entire geographical area of the state, the scope of the plan refers to the agencies addressed and the interoperability topics discussed. For example, it may be determined that the Department of Public Works is considered out of scope for the statewide plan. Timeframe refers to the period of time the plan is applicable.   Statewide plans should cover at least one year; however, states will likely specify a longer timeframe.   The specified timeframe should provide enough time to complete the critical initiatives identified in the statewide plan. The actual content of the plan does not need to be updated every year; however, states should perform an annual status check of the plan, and provide updates on progress against the strategic initiatives.

5.2 Strategy

The following statewide plan criteria are identified to assess statewide plans based on the description of the state's communications and interoperability strategy.

2.	Strategy
2.1	Describe the strategic vision, goals, and objectives for improving emergency response interagency wireless communications statewide, including how they connect with existing plans within the state.

The vision is the desired future environment of communications and interoperability within the state. It should be developed and agreed upon by the entire communications planning committee during the statewide planning process. It should also specify a specific timeframe. The timeframe for the vision is not required to be the same as the timeframe for the statewide plan. The vision should be supported by a mission statement. The difference between the vision and the mission statement is that the vision specifies the desired communications environment and the mission statement specifies how that environment will be achieved.

The statewide plan goals and objectives section should list the goals and objectives for the state that directly support the vision and mission statement. Goals are milestones and accomplishments that move the state closer to the desired future environment. It is recommended the state identify four to six goals for the statewide plan. Objectives should be directly associated with a specific goal and serve to clarify its purpose. While the goal specifies what is going to be done, the objectives define why and to what end the goal will improve communications interoperability.

In many cases, agreements among agencies and/or jurisdictions for multi-agency and multi-jurisdictional incident response are already in place, either formally or informally. The statewide plan should identify and define how the vision, goals, and objectives are integrated with or support these types of agreements.

2.	Strategy
2.2	Provide a strategic plan for coordination with neighboring states. If applicable, include a plan for coordination with neighboring countries.

The statewide plan should clearly specify how emergency response agencies within the state will interact with neighboring states and, where applicable, neighboring country agencies during an incident requiring resources from multiple states and countries. In some cases, interoperability with agencies from neighboring countries is not applicable; however, in situations where formal agreements are required with neighboring countries, the statewide plan should identify how the U.S. State Department will be involved in the agreement process. When considering interoperability across state borders, it is helpful to consider the five critical elements of the Interoperability Continuum and how the emergency response agencies will interact on those levels. Types of agencies that are not included in the plan for interoperability across state borders should be identified as outside the scope of the plan and provide justification as to why they were deemed out of scope or a plan for integrating those types of agencies in the future.

In cases where a plan for coordination with neighboring states and countries does not exist, the statewide plan should provide a course of action that will begin to develop such a plan, and a timeframe in which it is expected to be completed.

2.	Strategy
2.3	Provide a strategic plan for addressing data interoperability in addition to voice interoperability.

Because voice communications is only one aspect of communications interoperability, the statewide plan should also address data sharing across agency lines and jurisdictional borders. This should include, but not be limited to, the management of assets during an incident, traffic information, geographical maps, and other situational awareness information. Such data should be made available in electronic format and in real time during incident response.

In situations where a complete data interoperability plan has not been identified, the statewide plan should provide the state's strategy to begin the development of a data interoperability plan, and the timeframe in which it is expected to be developed and incorporated into the statewide plan.

2.	Strategy
2.4	Describe a strategy for addressing catastrophic loss of communication assets by developing redundancies in the communications interoperability plan.

During a major incident, such as a hurricane, earthquake, or terrorist attack, there is a risk that communications assets will become inoperable. For this reason, the statewide plan should provide a strategy for restoring communications when there is significant damage to the core infrastructure of the communications network. Each critical component in the communications network should be considered, and a backup strategy defined for the loss of that equipment. This type of strategy is often referred to as a disaster recovery plan.

2.	Strategy
2.5	Describe how the plan is, or will become, compliant with the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the National Response Plan.

Statewide plans should be developed with an understanding of the National Incident Management System (NIMS)[7] and the National Response Plan (NRP)[8]. To the extent possible, statewide plans should incorporate the strategic goals and objectives of the NRP and the procedures described in NIMS. It is recommended that each goal listed also provide a reference back to either the NIMS or the NRP to show how the goal is directly linked to those efforts.

2. Strategy	
2.6	Describe a strategy for addressing communications interoperability with the safety and security elements of the major transit systems, intercity bus service providers, ports, and passenger rail operations within the state.

The statewide plan should provide a list of critical communication assets and procedures that are to be used during incident response to communicate with the agencies servicing such operations as major transit systems, intercity bus services, ports, and passenger rail operations.

2. Strategy	
2.7	Describe the process for periodic review and revision of the state plan.

Statewide communications plans should be reviewed and updated regularly. To that end, the statewide plan should describe the process that will be used to update the statewide plan and should assign responsibilities to ensure updates occur. This should include tracking progress against the strategic initiatives identified in the statewide plan, and listing the major accomplishments and milestones that have been achieved in support of the state's vision, mission statement, and goals and objectives. DHS recommends that as statewide plans are updated, continual input at the local level from emergency response personnel and practitioners in the field be sought and incorporated.

5.3 Methodology

The following statewide plan criteria are identified to assess statewide plans based on the methodology used to develop the statewide plan and to manage the plan during implementation.

3. Methodology	
3.1	Describe the method by which multi-jurisdictional, multi-disciplinary input was provided from all regions of the state. For an example of a methodology that ensures input from all regions, see the Statewide Communication Interoperability Plan, or SCIP, methodology developed by SAFECOM.

Because local jurisdictions own and operate the majority of communication assets within the state, it is critical to develop a plan that has their support. Each statewide plan should describe the process used to gather and use local level input. The SCIP methodology may not meet the specific needs of every state and therefore may not be the methodology used to gather local input.

In situations where the statewide communications plan was not developed with multi-jurisdictional and multi-disciplinary input, the plan must provide an explanation and justification. Further, the statewide plan should include a strategy for engaging the local members of the emergency response community and gathering their input for future revisions of the plan.

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[7] http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/index.shtm
[8] http://www.dhs.gov/xprepresp/committees/editorial_0566.shtm

3.	Methodology
3.2	Define the process for continuing to have local input and for building local support of the plan.

Because statewide plans should be updated regularly, they are required to specifically explain how elected and appointed officials and local emergency responders will continue to be involved in the statewide communications interoperability planning process. Once the initial plan has been created, it is important to update the plan as tasks are completed and milestones are achieved, thus making the plan a "living document." The intent of this is to ensure the statewide planning process does not end with the publication of a statewide plan, but rather continues as it is improved and enhanced.

Note that this section is similar in addressing criteria 1.7 and 2.7.

3.	Methodology
3.3	Describe how the TICPs were incorporated into the statewide plan.

UASI areas across the Nation were required to create and exercise TIC Plans over the course of 2006. These plans identify the procedures and processes that will be used during a significant incident within a UASI region. Statewide plans should address and incorporate those TIC Plans into their overall approach to ensure the state and UASI region are compatible and interoperable. Further, the statewide plan should address the TIC Plan scorecard and any deficiencies found in the TIC Plan for each UASI region.

3.	Methodology
3.4	Describe the strategy for implementing all components of the statewide plan.

Statewide plans should contain a section addressing key strategic initiatives that will improve communications interoperability within the state. Strategic initiatives should be based on specific goals and objectives. For example, a goal may be to establish a statewide wireless communications infrastructure for all emergency response agencies to use. The strategic initiatives may be to issue an RFP, award a contract for new equipment, and solicit implementation support. Those key initiatives should be supported by an implementation plan that outlines the tasks and milestones necessary to complete the initiative. The implementation strategy may range from the duration of the statewide plan to a short-term implementation plan describing the process to create and execute a more detailed implementation plan. The importance of the implementation strategy is to identify the immediate steps that need to be taken to set the statewide plan in action and establish momentum. At a minimum, states should provide a 90-day action plan that identifies tasks and assigns responsibility for the tasks to specific resources. All tasks should directly support the strategic initiatives identified in the statewide plan.

5.4 Governance

The statewide plan criteria are identified to evaluate statewide plans based on the governance structure established to oversee the statewide communications interoperability planning effort.

4.	Governance
4.1	Identify the executive or legislative authority for the governing body of the interoperability effort.

Governing bodies for communications interoperability efforts are essential to ensure that focus and direction is maintained as well as to provide guidance and assistance when efforts are slowed or stalled. DHS strongly recommends creating a governing body to serve as the state's interoperability committee. Furthermore, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) strongly encourages the formation of a State Interoperability Executive Committee (SIEC) or another equally effective state-level agency to administer 700 MHz interoperability channels in states where no such organization already exists.

Statewide plans should identify the governing body that is or will be overseeing the interoperability project and development of the statewide plan. In some cases, it may be appropriate to expand the SIEC to serve as the governing body. In addition, the statewide plan should reference the executive or legislative authority granted to that governing body. In cases where no legislative or executive authority has been granted to the governing body, the statewide plan should provide a strategy to establish executive or legislative authority for the governing body and a timeframe in which it is expected to be in place.

4. Governance	
4.2	Provide an overview of the governance structure that will oversee development and implementation of the plan. Illustrate how it is representative of all of the relevant emergency response disciplines and regions in the state.

As stated above, creation of a governing body for oversight is an essential part of the communications interoperability improvement process. Because of the criticality of the governing body, it is assumed that every state will have established some form of governing body for their communications interoperability program before 2008. Therefore, statewide plans should provide a detailed explanation of the state's governance structure responsible for the management of the communications interoperability project and the development and implementation of the statewide plan. The governance structure should include multi-jurisdictional and multi-disciplinary representatives from across the state to ensure the project and statewide plan are managed with the entire state's input. This information can be presented in a graphical organizational chart supplemented by a list of names in the governance structure and the agency and jurisdiction they represent.

4. Governance	
4.3	Provide the charter for the governing body, and use the charter to state the principles, roles, responsibilities, and processes.

Once a governing body has been created, one of the first tasks the group will need to perform is creating a charter for themselves. A charter document will establish the roles and responsibilities of the members of the governing body as well as define the decision making process the group will use to make communications and interoperability decisions. In addition, the charter will establish the goals and objectives of the governing body. Because creating the governing body is considered one of the first steps in communications interoperability improvement, it is likely that the goals and objectives for the governing body will be created prior to the goals and objectives created during the statewide planning process. While the goals and objectives of the governing body and the statewide plan may vary, they should be sufficiently aligned to ensure the project will not be negatively affected by conflicting agendas. Therefore, it may be necessary for the governing body to periodically update their goals and objectives in the charter.

For assistance on creating a charter for a communications interoperability governing body, the SAFECOM and DM programs created the Creating a Charter for a Multi-Agency Communications Interoperability Committee document.[9]

4. Governance	
4.4	Identify the members of the governing body and any of its committees.

Often, this information will be included in the charter document for the governing body as well as the organization chart created to satisfy Statewide Plan Criterion 4.1. If a list of names in the governance structure for the state's communications interoperability effort is not provided as a part of the organizational structure or the charter, the list should be included in an appropriate section of the statewide plan. The list should also identify members of the governance structure that have voting authority on issues and topics directly affecting the statewide plan and its strategic initiatives.

4. Governance	
4.5	Provide a meeting schedule for the governing body.

It is recommended that the governing body create a meeting schedule and publicize the schedule to the rest of the communications interoperability project participants. Governing bodies can determine how frequently meetings are required; however, in the early stages of a project it may be appropriate for the governing body to meet frequently to address any issues and roadblocks the planning effort may encounter. To meet this criteria the statewide plan should provide a meeting schedule for the governing body that covers at least the timeframe established for the statewide plan in the overview section of the document.

4. Governance	
4.6	Describe multi-jurisdictional, multi-disciplinary agreements needed for decision-making and for sharing resources.

In creating an overarching governance structure with representatives from across the state and multiple disciplines, it may be necessary to create formal agreements among the public and private agencies involved in the project. In cases where a formal Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been created, the statewide plan should provide information about the agreements. The statewide plan should include the agencies included in the agreement, the period of time the agreement is effective, a brief description of the agreement including resources and procedures, and the signatures included on the agreement.

In situations where formal agreements are not necessary, the statewide plan should explain why agreements were not needed, and if there are plans to establish formal agreements. If the state intends to establish agreements among agencies and jurisdictions, the statewide plan should provide a timeframe in which the agreements will be established.

5.5 Technology

The following statewide plan criteria are identified to evaluate statewide plans based on technology considerations as they pertain to communications interoperability.

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[9] The document is available for download at
www.safecomprogram.gov/SAFECOM/library/interoperabilitybasics/1290_creatinga.htm.

5.	Technology
5.1	Include a statewide capabilities assessment (or a plan for one) which includes, critical communications equipment and related interoperability issues. At a minimum this should include types of radio systems, data and incident management systems, the manufacturer, and frequency assignments for each major emergency responder organization within the state. Ultimately more detailed information will be required to complete the documentation of a migration strategy. States may use the Communications Asset Survey and Mapping (CASM) tool to conduct this assessment.

As previously stated in Statewide Plan Criteria 1.4, a capabilities assessment of the current communications and interoperability environment is an important step in creating a statewide communications interoperability plan. As a part of that capabilities assessment, the technology used for communications in the state should be evaluated. The technology assessment should provide an inventory of the key data and communications systems operating within the state and the jurisdictions operating on those systems. When creating a list of the data and communications equipment for the state, every major jurisdiction within the state should be included.

> The CASM tool tracks equipment already available and in use and depicts how it fits together.
>
> There are two Web-based components – for collecting and displaying data.
>
> For more information on the CASM tool and how it can be used in a state, contact CASM-support@spawar.navy.mil.

The CASM[10] tool provided by the DHS Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program (ICTAP)[11] can be used to inventory the communications assets in the state. However, CASM data collection and display capabilities are limited to land mobile radio (LMR) voice interoperability. The CASM tool is a Web-based tool that agencies can use to store the interoperable communications equipment inventory and current radio communications infrastructure information. This collected data will reside in a secure database that only authorized participating agencies will be able to access.

5.	Technology
5.2	Describe plans for continuing support of legacy systems, and developing interfaces among disparate systems, while migrating to newer technologies.

Acquiring and implementing new technology is not always the best way to improve communications interoperability. Most agencies will be required to maintain existing systems while focusing on other areas of interoperability. In this scenario, it is necessary to define a strategy for the maintenance and management of the existing systems and how those systems will be incorporated into the new communications architecture being established across the entire state.

Statewide plans should identify all critical communication technologies operating in the state that are components of the statewide voice and data infrastructure. The statewide plan should identify the parties responsible for the operation of the systems and the creation of any interfaces to other existing or newly acquired systems.

In situations where a complete plan for the management of existing systems has not yet been defined, the statewide plan should include a strategy for the development of a plan and a timeframe in which it is expected to be complete.

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[10] http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/docs/CASM_trifold8Final.pdf
[11] http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/ta_ictap.htm

5. Technology	
5.2.1	Describe the migration plan for moving from existing technologies to newly procured technologies.

Developing a statewide strategy for communications interoperability may require the procurement of new technologies. If new technologies are acquired and implemented within the state to replace existing technologies, a strategy will be required to migrate users from the existing system to the newly implemented system. The migration strategy should include information such as the user community that will migrate from one system to another, the timeframe over which the migration will occur, a "go live" date for the new system, a process for training users on the new system, and a shutoff date for the old system.

In situations where a migration strategy has not been defined, the statewide plan should identify a plan to develop a migration strategy and a timeframe in which it is expected to be complete.

5. Technology	
5.2.2	Describe the process that will be used to ensure that new purchases comply with the statewide plan, while generally allowing existing equipment to serve out its useful life.

Eventually, new voice and data equipment will be procured and implemented within the state to improve communications and interoperability. To ensure newly-procured equipment is aligned with the statewide plan, the plan should provide a process that ensures all new system procurements are directly aligned with the goals and objectives of the statewide plan.

In situations where a formal process for ensuring future procurements are aligned with the statewide plan has not been defined, the statewide plan should provide a strategy for developing the process, and a timeframe in which it is expected to be complete.

5.6 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

The following statewide plan criteria are identified to evaluate statewide plans based on the level in which SOPs are addressed.

6. Standard Operating Procedures	
6.1	Include an assessment of current local, regional, and state operating procedures which support interoperability.

Part of the previously mentioned capabilities assessment is to evaluate the existing SOPs in use within the state. This information should be included in the current state assessment section of the statewide plan. All operating procedures listed should include a description of the procedure, any agencies currently using it, scenarios in which the procedure is employed, and the frequency of its use. Additionally, the statewide plan should identify the means by which practitioners across the state can access the statewide SOPs.

In situations where there are no current SOPs in place, the statewide plan should identify this as part of the current state assessment. In addition, if a capabilities assessment has not been performed, the statewide plan should provide a strategy to perform a capabilities assessment and a timeframe in which it is expected to be complete.

6. Standard Operating Procedures	
6.2	Define the process by which the state, regions, and localities will develop, manage, maintain, upgrade, and communicate standard operating procedures (SOPs), as appropriate.

In addition to the existing SOPs, new and updated SOPs will be required as part of the communications interoperability improvement effort. Multi-jurisdictional and multi-disciplinary groups should identify and incorporate best practices and lessons learned to document the most appropriate and effective procedures for all emergency responders involved. Further, new SOPs should be directly aligned with the procedures in the NIMS.

States should anticipate that most SOPs will be generated and used at the local level and therefore, the statewide plan should provide a process for locally-driven SOPs to receive state-level endorsement. Statewide plans should provide a process that will be used to identify or define new SOPs to facilitate cross-agency and cross-jurisdictional response. It should include a process for identifying and defining the new SOP and criteria for selecting those people. The statewide plan should also include details on how the state will update SOPs as necessary and publicize them to increase availability to the state emergency response community and increase the likelihood that they will be used by practitioners during incident response. In some cases, it may be appropriate to establish a control board responsible for the management of established SOPs, and making the final decisions on changes that need to be made. The control board should be representative of all disciplines and several jurisdictions within the state to ensure all practitioner needs are considered in SOPs.

In situations where a process has not been defined for the development and management of additional SOPs, the statewide plan should provide a strategy for developing the process and a timeframe in which it is expected to be complete.

6. Standard Operating Procedures	
6.3	Identify the agencies included in the development of the SOPs, and the agencies expected to comply with the SOPs.

Included in the assessment of current SOPs should be information on the agencies responsible for the development of the SOP, and the agencies that are expected to use it. This information can be included in the data presented to satisfy statewide plan criteria 6.1 or separately. However, this information should all be presented in the current state assessment section of the statewide plan.

In situations where there are no existing SOPs, the statewide plan should specify that there are no SOPs currently in place.

6. Standard Operating Procedures	
6.4	Demonstrate how the SOPs are NIMS-compliant in terms of the Incident Command System (ICS) and preparedness.

When identifying SOPs currently in place as part of the capabilities assessment, the statewide plan should identify how the existing SOPs comply with NIMS. In some cases, existing SOPs will not be NIMS-compliant. In this situation, the statewide plan should identify the SOPs that are not compliant with NIMS and define a strategy to update the SOPS to be NIMS-compliant.

5.7 Training and Exercises

The following statewide plan criteria are identified to evaluate statewide plans based on the level in which training and exercises are addressed.

7.	Training and Exercises
7.1	Define the process by which the state will develop, manage, maintain and upgrade, or coordinate as appropriate, a statewide training and exercises program.

If the state already has a training and exercises program for the entire state, the statewide plan should provide details on the program. If a training and exercises program does not exist, the statewide plan should provide details on the process that will be used to create and manage the program, ensuring that appropriate training and exercises are available to all practitioners across the state. The Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) provides additional information to consider when creating a training and exercises program.[12]

When evaluating local training for compliance with the statewide plan, it is important that training programs cover any and all communication devices a responder would use. The local courses should cover:

- The radios used on a regular basis, and the interoperability capability contained within

- Training should cover any other communication devices that are normally used and the interoperability capability of these devices, i.e., mobile radios, MDTs, etc.

- Training should also be required on other communications equipment that is available for interoperability and require a demonstration of the responders ability to set up the equipment

Statewide plans should include the following information for training and exercises offered as a part of the program:

- Course/Exercise Name

- Purpose of Course/Exercise

- Frequency Offered

- Agencies Included

- Instructors/Coordinators

- For Exercises – Methodology Used

In situations where a process has not been defined for creating and managing a statewide training and exercises program, the statewide plan should provide a strategy for developing the process, and a timeframe in which it is expected to be complete.

7.	Training and Exercises
7.2	Describe the process for offering and requiring training and exercises, as well as any certification that will be needed.

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[12] Visit the HSEEP Web site at https://hseep.dhs.gov/ for more details.

As a part of the state's training and exercises program, the statewide plan should identify the process that will be used to publicize and offer training to the appropriate members of the emergency response community within the state. Specifically, the statewide plan should identify how training courses and exercises will be marketed to the emergency response community and how those seeking information on training available to them can learn about the training program. Additionally, if the state intends to require training for anyone, the statewide plan should identify required training and specify a process for ensuring all who are required will be trained.

In situations where a process has not been identified for offering training and exercises, the statewide plan should include a strategy that defines a process and a timeframe in which it is expected to be complete.

7. Training and Exercises	
7.3	Explain how the process ensures that training is cross-disciplinary.

When defining the state's training and exercises program, the statewide plan should include a description of how the training and exercises program is cross-disciplinary. In some scenarios, it may not be appropriate to provide the same training to all disciplines within the state. However, whenever possible, training and exercises require cross-disciplinary communications as part of the exercise.

In situations where a training and exercises program does not exist, this does not apply.

5.8 Usage

The following statewide plan criteria are identified to evaluate statewide plans based on the level in which usage is addressed.

8. Usage	
8.1	Describe the plan for ensuring regular usage of the relevant equipment and the SOPs needed to improve interoperability.

The usage element of the Interoperability Continuum focuses on the actual usage of equipment, technology, SOPs, and training and exercises in day-to-day operations to ensure proper usage during a large-scale incident. The statewide plan should provide an explanation of how the state intends to ensure interoperable equipment, SOPs, and training and exercises are implemented in the daily operations of practitioners. These steps should be mandatory for an agency to be in compliance with the statewide plan.

In situations where a plan has not been defined to promote usage of interoperable equipment, SOPs, and training and exercises, the statewide plan should include a strategy to develop one and provide a timeframe in which it is expected to be complete.

5.9 Funding

The following statewide plan criteria are identified to evaluate statewide plans based on the funding strategy identified.

9. Funding	
9.1	Identify committed sources of funding, or the process for identifying and securing short- and long-term funding

Statewide planning and communications interoperability projects require a significant amount of time and resources. To ensure efforts continue and maintain momentum, agencies require adequate funding to support the project. Statewide plans are required to identify funding that will support the efforts within the state to further develop their plans, and begin the process of implementing the strategic initiatives identified in the plan. If funding has not been identified to support the communications interoperability program, the statewide plan should identify the gap and provide a process for identifying a short-term funding strategy, including the people responsible for creating the funding strategy.

9. Funding	
9.2	Include a plan for the development of a comprehensive funding strategy. The plan should include a process for identifying ongoing funding sources, anticipated costs, and resources needed for project management and leveraging active projects.

In addition to the information provided to satisfy Statewide Plan criteria 9.1, the statewide plan should also provide a comprehensive funding strategy that includes a business case outlining anticipated costs and benefits of the program, and how the costs will be funded. Furthermore, the funding strategy should identify the resources required to fill the various positions in the organizational chart.

In situations where a detailed funding strategy has not been defined, the statewide plan should provide a process for identifying a comprehensive, long-term funding strategy, including the people responsible for creating the funding strategy.

5.10 Implementation

The following statewide plan criteria are identified to evaluate statewide plans based on the implementation strategy defined.

10. Implementation	
10.1	Describe the prioritized action plan with short- and long-term goals for achieving the objectives.

Statewide plans are required to define the key strategic initiatives the emergency response communications community will focus on for both the short and long term. Key initiatives should be prioritized as agreed upon by the governance committee. Each key initiative should be supported by action items and tasks that will begin the process of communications interoperability improvement and accomplish the desired goals and objectives stated in the statewide plan.

Every statewide plan submitted is expected to provide a list of initiatives and supporting action items for the timeframe specified.

10. Implementation	
10.2	Describe the performance measures that will allow policy makers to track the progress and success of initiatives.

It is critical to identify a method to measure success of the communications interoperability projects. This allows successes to be communicated and used to promote the statewide interoperability program. Additionally, the performance measures can be used to identify efforts that do not result in the desired outcomes, so that they can be reviewed and addressed appropriately. Statewide plans should provide criteria that will be used to measure the success of interoperability efforts and implementation of the statewide interoperability plan. Criteria will vary depending on the strategic initiatives identified in the plan. However, during the statewide planning process it is recommended that the planning community have a discussion on how it will be able to measure success. The statewide plan should also provide a schedule for periodic reviews of the initiatives to constantly track performance and progress.

If no performance measures have been identified, the statewide plan should provide a strategy for developing them, and specify a timeframe in which they are expected to be identified.

10. Implementation	
10.3	Describe the plan for educating policy makers and practitioners on interoperability goals and initiatives.

Statewide plans should provide a strategy for communicating to and educating emergency responders and policy makers in the state on the interoperability goals and strategic initiatives identified in the statewide plan. A well-defined outreach plan will identify critical officials and emergency response personnel who will need to be kept aware of the statewide interoperability project and its goals and objectives. The plan will also define the method in which this information will be provided to these stakeholders regularly. In addition, the statewide plan should define outreach efforts to market the state's communications interoperability program and expand the community of program participants.

In situations where a strategy for educating project participants and an outreach plan have not been defined, the statewide plan should provide a plan to define them, and specify a timeframe in which they are expected to be complete.

10. Implementation	
10.4	Describe the roles and opportunities for involvement of all agencies in the implementation of the statewide plan.

Statewide plans should define the roles and responsibilities associated with the execution of the implementation plan. Tasks should have a specific role assigned them and each role should have a specific resource to which it is assigned. The implementation strategy for the statewide plan should provide ample opportunity for representatives from across the state and from multiple disciplines to become engaged and participate in implementation. In some cases it may not make sense for all agencies to be involved; however, as part of the communication strategy and outreach plan progress of the project should always be communicated to the entire emergency response community.

In situations where roles and opportunities for involvement have not been fully defined, the statewide plan should provide a strategy for defining them, and a timeframe in which they are expected to be defined.

10.	Implementation
10.5	Establish a plan for identifying, developing, and overseeing operational requirements, SOPs, training, technical solutions, and short- and long-term funding sources.

As the communications interoperability program and projects progress, new operational and technical requirements will be identified and opportunities to update SOPs, training, and exercises will present themselves. The statewide plan should provide a strategy to collect and manage this information to ensure requirements and opportunities for improvements are not lost. Typically, a single person or group of people will be tasked as the responsible party for soliciting and managing suggestions from program participants across the state. In addition, the statewide plan should define the process by which field-level emergency responders can submit feedback to the program, as well as a process to evaluate and address that feedback. States should define a response time for all input and feedback received so as to encourage participants to continually submit their ideas.

In situations where a process has not been defined for managing incoming feedback and input, the statewide plan should identify a strategy to develop the process and a timeframe in which it is expected to be complete.

10.	Implementation
10.6	Identify a POC responsible for implementing the plan.

As previously described, the statewide plan must identify a point of contact responsible for managing the creation and documentation of the statewide plan. In addition, the statewide plan should specify a point of contact responsible for managing the implementation of strategic initiatives and action items. It is recommended that a single point of contact be responsible for managing the plan and the implementation process. While it is not required for the coordinator to serve in this capacity full time, the designation of a full-time position is strongly recommended to ensure the functions of statewide plan coordination are performed and implementation of the plan receives sufficient time and attention.

10.	Implementation
10.7	Describe critical success factors for implementation of the plan.

Similar to identifying a method to measure success of the program, the statewide plan should identify critical success factors for implementation. Critical success factors are defined as milestones and accomplishments that must be achieved to improve communications interoperability in the state. Typically, the critical success factors will be the milestones and accomplishments associated with the top-priority strategic initiatives. Every statewide plan is required to define critical success factors for implementation.